

REMARKS

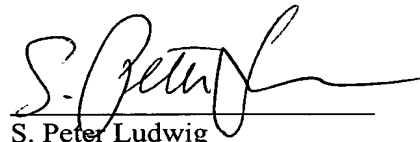
This application contains claims 1-40. Claims 1-10, 19-29 and 38-40 are allowed. Claim 11 has been amended to correct a typographical error noted by the Examiner. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 11-14 and 30-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over May et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2002/0110213). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Applicants submit herewith a Declaration under 37 CFR 1.131, proving that the present invention was conceived prior to the filing date of May (February 13, 2001), and that constructive reduction to practice of the invention proceeded with due diligence from a date prior to the publication date of May up to the date of filing of the present patent application on March 7, 2001. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that May may not be considered prior art against the present patent application. Therefore, claims 11-14 and 30-33 are believed to be patentable.

Claims 15-18 and 34-36 were objected to for depending from rejected base claims, but were deemed to recite allowable subject matter. In view of the patentability of independent claims 11 and 30, as explained above, Applicants believe that this objection should now be withdrawn.

Applicants believe the amendments and remarks presented hereinabove to be fully responsive to all of the objections and grounds of rejection raised by the Examiner. In view of these amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims in the present application are in order for allowance. Notice to this effect is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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